# ADVENT 1960

They shall call his name
Emmanuel
.... God with us

## the NEWS BULLETIN

of the
Near East Christian Council

"...from Iran to Morocco, from Turkey to the Sudan..."

# PRESENTING

**(from left to right)**

**CHRISTIAN PRAYER..... Book No. 16 in the Arabic Series of the World Christian Books. Two more books of this series will be published before the end of the year.**

**FIVE QUESTIONS TO GOD'S TRUSTEES.... an original devotional piece of work for those in Christian service.**

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**THESE ARE IN YOUR BOOKSHOPS**

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# THE NEWS BULLETIN OF THE NEAR EAST CHRISTIAN COUNCIL

## ADVENT 1960

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## AN EDITORIAL

*Read All About It!*

If first-century Jerusalem had boasted of modern newspapers, can't you just imagine the coverage one certain event might have received?...

Perhaps the first notice might have been hidden in the center pages... "Local observers have reported the appearance of a new star in the heavens, of extreme brightness." No 'satelite' launching had been reported, but all the best astronomers had been called in to discover more about it.

Or perhaps under the local news from Bethlehem... "Shepherds reported strange occurrences in the fields one night last week." And then some noted psychologist undoubtedly mentioned something about the prevalence of religious hallucination among the unlearned shepherds.

The visit of the Magi would surely hit the front page! And I daresay the story of the Massacre of the Innocents would have as well... that is, if it hadn't been censored out!

But, dispensing with all this imagination, people of the world of 1960, whether in Jerusalem, or in Cairo, or in Beirut, or anywhere else in this Near East, can *read all about it* — in the pages of Christian literature being circulated. That's why we have featured some of the emphases of literature in the Near East in this issue. Times haven't changed so terribly much. For every one page on the Star of Bethlehem there are ten trying to explain it away. For every one article on the Child whom shepherds worshipped there are ten trying to attribute faith in Him as hallucination, or blasphemy.

But the work of Christian literature goes on... so that the world may *know*. It depends on writers and publishers, and on readers. But the News it tells is still the Good News of the way God acted, and acts today, in Jesus Christ. It has to compete with all the other newsprint of the day, and all the other diversions of time and energy. But people have to *read all about it!*

As you go through these pages, think about your part in this work. You're a reader — right now. Maybe you write? At least you can help circulate these bits of *The News* through buying and giving. You're a part of this work of Christian literature. Don't force it into tiny little type by lack of financial assistance, but help it to grow and blossom and be fruitful here in the land where God has placed us to announce and publish His Good News!

ERIK STIDSEN

# EVANGELISM through LITERATURE

**...Books, books and more books! This is the cry coming up from all over. There is a desperate need for Christian literature as more and more people turn to the bookstands of the world. But literature is not only the book production or the mechanics of writing... It is a valuable way of presenting the Gospel through the ambassador of the printed word. The Correspondent on Evangelism of the Council points the way in this day and age to the what, where, and how of evangelism through literature. .. .. .....**

What can be done to make it possible for the work of Christ to continue if its ambassadors are forced to leave a country before a strong indigenous church has been established? How is the Gospel to enter the many closed countries round about us? These two questions are being asked by many Christians today, especially in the Near East. No doubt, the answer is.... *Literature Evangelism.*

When the mouths of missionaries and evangelists have been closed, the work can continue through Christian literature. We all know how quickly spoken words are forgotten, and how often they are recited with a meaning quite different than the original. The advantage of the word "spoken" in writing is that it never changes. The reader can return to it again and again. A sentence, difficult to understand in the beginning, can be read through until it is fully

understood, and it can be shared with others without the danger of the original working being changed. And all this can be done by this ambassador alone, without the help of another person.

While it is almost impossible for an evangelist or a missionary, it is usually possible for the written word to get into a closed country. A man cannot very easily be hidden away in the pocket or the bag of a traveller, but, with a small book or pamphlet, this is quite a simple thing, and is often practiced in this part of the world. In this way books ger into remote places, where they are passed from hand to hand. A man, who would never dream of preaching the Christian Gospel, reads a book aloud to people, who hardly know of any book other than the Qur'an. God stars His work in their hearts, and when they themselves get to an area where they can hear the Gospel preached, they listen with greater interest, and they buy more of these strange books.

Certainly good Christian literature can be used both in preparing the ground for the reception of the Gospel, and in keeping the Gospel alive in the hearts of people.

*What kind of literature ?*

Most Christian workers among Muslims seem to agree that the most suitable literature is the Holy Bible, whether in full or in portions, and it is fortunate that this can be sold at very low prices.

While reading the Bible the Muslim will undoubtedly raise quite a few questions to which he does not know the answers. He will find obvious disagreements between the Bible and the Qur'an, and he will hesitate over the classical stumbling blocks. He will probably return to the seller of the book to put his questions to him. The seller might be able to give satisfactory answers to these questions, but, in any case, it is most helpful for him to be able to present something to the enquirer in writing.

The literature needed in these situations must be very simple. As clearly as possible, it must try to answer one question at a time, even though the author must be aware of other relevant questions bound to be asked and also attempt to give an answer to them.

Other readers of the Bible, or scripture portions, might not have the courage to bring their questions to a Christian missionary or evangelist. They might instead discuss the questions with Muslim teachers and get their answers from them. For these readers, this basic literature is very necessary. And one thing is important: *The appearance of the book must be attractive.* The book must be made to sell itself.

Those engaged in general bookselling know how difficult it is to sell Christian literature, not only because it is Christian, but because far too little has been done to make its appearance attractive. Most Christian literature needs the touch of propaganda, and here we could learn something from the propagandists. The best can never be good enough when it is going to serve as a medium for getting the Good News across. Bright coloured covers with short appealing titles are just as important as the inner contents, if the books are to serve the right purpose. Very few people expect to find anything interesting inside a dull cover. Undoubtedly, behind the dull cover lies the intention to produce a book that can be sold at a low price. This intention can be appreciated, but it might be better to decrease the quantity and increase the quality.

*How do we get it out ?*

In some places, Christian missions and churches have established *general bookshops* long before others thought of doing anything along that line. These bookshops have become very important cultural centres in their respective areas, in many cases. They have often been forced upon the missions and churches as their educational work created a demand for schooltexts and other literature. As the work developed, not only mission schools but also other private and government schools benefited from them. In that way useful contacts were made with the future leaders of the country.

The most natural thing for such a bookshop would be to have a good stock of Christian literature, including a depot for the Bible society. The person in charge would be responsible for the distribution of good sound literature, utilizing all means possible to enable good circulation of the books.

One of the advantages of such a work is that it can be made to pay its way without support from mission or church funds. Often it has been able to pay considerable amounts into such funds or into the work of producing Christian literature in the language of the country. Another advantage is that Christian literature is given a natural place among other literature, and is displayed to people who would never search for that kind of literature, nor visit a church or meeting hall.

Where the task of running a general bookshop is found impossible, there is always the possibility of running a small Christian *book depot,* and our Christian literature societies would undoubtedly be only too happy to help build up such depots. However, even if bookshops or book depots are run with great efficiency, there will always be people who cannot be bothered to visit such places. Then we must go to them. That can be done in a number of different ways.

*Book stalls* in clubs, churches, and meeting halls are comparatively easy to run. The only thing needed is a small cupboard or table where the books may be displayed, and a member of the congregation to look after it. Only a few books should be displayed at a time, and it should be made a rule in churches to review and recommend one book each week, or, in connection with the sermon. That is, if the sermon was based upon a text from one of the Gospels, that particular Gospel could be the *book of the week.* Or, if the subject of the sermon was "The Incarnation of Christ", a book on that subject could be on sale and recommended. In that way, there are plenty of opportunities for following up the spoken word by the sale of good Christian literature.

Greater and greater numbers of books are in these days distributed in all parts of the world. As Christians we must see our responsibility with regard to this work of producing and distributing literature. We must realize the value of Christian literature in stabilizing the work of Christ and in the task of getting the Good News into countries closed to any other kind of Christian work.

* * * * *

Love can only find satisfaction in a response which is freely given.
Max Warren in *Partnership*

E. VERNA PILLOW

# A Look at C.L.C. Khartoum

If you travel along Kasr Boulevard in Khartoum which connects the railway station with the Palace of the Republic you will pass a new brick building on one of the corners. دار النشر المسيحي in red and green neon lights identifies it as the Christian Literature Center, and below the sign are two display windows — an invitation to step into the reading room and library to enjoy the large selection of newspapers, magazines and books.

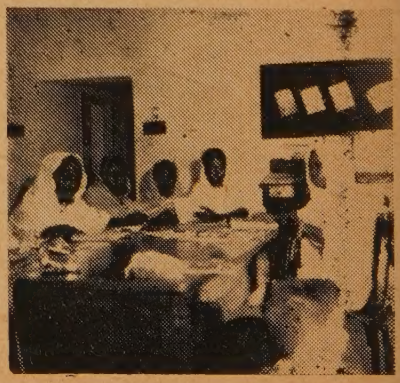
The Christian Literature Center had its beginning in the fall of 1956 when a small three room building was erected on an advantageous corner of the American Mission property in Khartoum, The Sudan. The public was invited into a small reading room. In a second room were the books for the lending library, and in the

third the beginnings of an audio-visual library. This was a new venture, and as the door was open for the first time, we wondered how succesful it would be. The response was so great that almost immediately we realized that we had planned too small, and this bore witness to the fact that the people of the Sudan are anxious to learn and readily take advantage of any chance to further their knowledge.

*A New Christian Literature Center*

God saw fit to provide funds for a new and larger center to be built. It was opened in April 1959, and is about four times the size of the first, and already justifies its existence. A children's corner with benches, wicker chairs and tables to accomodate twenty-five children is often full to over-flowing; the three long tables surrounded by chairs plus extras around the walls in the men's section are well used; and slowly the women's section is taking on readers. Every week the list of subscribers to the lending library of 4000 books grows longer. Other departments of the Center are growing apace, calling continually for increased staff, which now consists of seven full-time workers and two part-time.

Although the center was established in the hope of especially serving the church, it is the non-Christian community that has responded most heartily. Recently we heard the remark from such a visiting group, "We didn't know it was for everyone. We thought from the sign that it was for Christians only!" We have reason



to believe that as it becomes better known, we will find more of the general public entering the door.

*Audio-Visual Library*

The Audio-Visual Library is steadily growing in materials to be loaned. Filmstrips and films are the most used by schools, clubs and churches. They are not only

used by groups in the Khartoum area, but are also mailed out into the provinces. Flannelgraph and flat pictures are aimed to fill the needs of teachers of the new Arabic Sunday School graded lessons. There is much need for demonstration and instruction in the use of materials, and we look forward to this being a part of the future program.

A music room is a project of the Audio-Visual Department, where music lovers may come and listen to good records of various kinds. Except for Gospel Recording records in several Sudan languages, records are not loaned but used only in the music room.

*Bible Correspondance Courses*

Approximately two hundred and twenty have enrolled for Bible correspondence courses since the beginning of this department in January 1959. Of this number, more than half study in English, the others in Arabic. The predominance of English is accounted for by the fact that many lessons go to prisons where many Christian Southern Sudanese have been since the 1955 mutiny. These men received their education before Arabic became the official language of the whole Sudan. It is encouraging to note the keenness of these men for Bible study and in some cases their zeal in witnessing to fellow prisoners.

About 15% of the students enrolled have finished the first course, a study of the Life of Jesus from the Gospel of St. Mark, and have gone on to the second course in the Acts of the Apostles. For the succesful com-

pletion of each course a credit card with an appropriate book is awarded. Finally a diploma will be presented to each one finishing the entire five courses being prepared.

*Distribution*

Since the beginning of our literature program, we have stocked Christian Arabic publications from the various publishing houses in the Near East. As many as possible were sold through visits to the churches with a Traveling Library, through the reading room, and in supplying the needs of the various mission stations. But we have sorely felt the need of an adequate distribution program. Only recently has a sales manager been added to our staff who will push sales of books and magazines in the Khartoum area through newsstands as well as in the churches. Also a young Sudanese has undertaken the job of traveling with Christian literature into the outstations. It is too early to report progress, but we do realize that here lies a tremendous field for development.

*Writers' Fellowship*

Each month a group of men and women of the Evangelical congregations of the Khartoum area meet to evaluate and discuss their work as writers for the monthly Arabic magazine, *Kunuz al Ma'arifa*. The circulation of the magazine is steadily growing in the Sudan and reaches several other countries as well under the direction of Wesley Stasy, editor. Written in a simple classical Arabic, it has a large potential of readers since it is the only publication of its kind in the country. While particularly aimed at reaching those of limited reading ability, its variety of articles attracts the interest of veteran readers as well.

Besides having published a few small publications of its own, the Christian Literature Center works in cooperation with the North Sudan Christian Council Literature Committee, which is a part of the Arabic Christian Literature Committee of the N.E.C.C. This group has been especially concerned with publications for which there is a particular need in the local area, but it looks forward to fuller service in relation to the whole Christian Arabic literature program.

*The Challenge*

The Sudan is a young country. She is progressive — full of people reaching out for knowledge. What a challenge to fill the outstretched hands with literature that is not just worthwhile, but life-giving ! We at the C.L.C. — Khartoum will appreciate your prayers and the sharing of your suggestions as we march forward endeavouring to meet this challenge.

# Johann Schneller

a radio script by

Ibrahim Mattar

## father of the fatherless

**This year is the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Syrian Orphanage by Johann Ludvig Schneller, and in connection with this occasion for thanksgiving and rejoicing, special ceremonies have been planned, and special note taken of the event.** The News Bulletin **also adds its congratulations to the staff of the schools, and prays God's guidance in the future as in the past. This radio script was prepared for broadcast on the NECC radio series,** In the Procession of Light, **in Arabic, but has been translated by the Rev. Yusuf Abdul Noor for inclusion in this issue.** . . . . . .

*Theme Music* (then fade)

*Announcer*: In The Procession of Light Music Comes up and fades) Johann Schneller, the Father of the Fatherless, a radio play written by Ibrahim Mattar, and produced by the Near East Christian Council.

*Music* (up and then fade into...)

*Sound Effects*: Sound of machinery and the voices of children, with music in the background.

*Tourist*: Tell me, guide, what is the reason for all this clamour in this area of the Holy City?

*Guide*: That noise of machinery and children is coming from the Schneller School.

*Tourist*: And are all these buildings a part of the school?

*Guide*: Yes, these are all the school buildings. That tower over there is the church tower, and that chimney is the chimney of the factory.

*Tourist*: This must be the first institution of its kind in the Holy Land. Who thought of this unique project?

*Guide*: Johann Schneller was the founder of this institution. He was one of the pioneer German missionaries in Palestine.

*Tourist*: What did you say was the name of this place? Why was it founded here?

*Guide*: This is known as the Syrian Orphanage. Its aim is the care of the orphans of these countries. The school trains them in useful occupations that will support them after they complete all their studies, and go out to find work.

*Tourist*: I am amazed at this humanitarian project. I'm sure that its founder must have been a man filled with faith and hape and love.

(*Music builds up*)

*Announcer*: Let us turn back in our thoughts to the year 1860 and see how this school began. Here is Johann Schneller speaking with Dr. Ford in Sidon, Lebanon...

*Ford*: Welcome to you, Johann Schneller, servant of God and humanity.

*Schneller*: Dr. Ford, we are both servants of the Lord in the field of education.

*Ford*: I thought you were working in the Holy Land. Why have you come to Lebanon?

*Schneller*: I have heard the disturbing news of what happened in Syria, and so I have come here to assist by taking children back to my orphanage in Jerusalem.

*Ford*: Do you have the money to begin this kind of work?

*Schneller*: My only assurance is with God. It is my firm faith that God will help me.

*Ford*: Look at these camps filled with refugees... they've left their homes, and now they're homeless.

*Schneller*: What a terrible need for humanitarian work to help these poor victims!

*Ford*: War is terrible! And this is the only evidence of its results.

*Schneller*: What is man doing to his brother man?...

*Ford*: But, let me call some of the young boys here so that you can speak with them.

*Schneller*: Do you feel that they can leave this country and come with me to Jerusalem?

*Ford*: Well, let's talk it over with them, and see if we can persuade them.

(Calls in a loud voice) Najeeb, come here! Bring your friend, Haleem!

*Najeeb*: Here I am, Dr. Ford... You know that I have become an orphan.

*Haleem*: And to one single relative of mine is now living.

*Ford*: Well, how would like to go with Father Schneller to Jerusalem?

*Najeeb*: To Jerusalem? And leave my younger brothers all alone here?

*Haleem*: An what will we do in Jerusalem? Isn't it bad enough that we've had to leave our own village?

*Schneller*: A school has been opened for orphans, a training school to teach them useful occupations in order that they may be independent...

*Najeeb*: And how do we get to Jerusalem?

*Schneller*: Like everyone else, by horse or donkey.

*Haleem*: And will we be alone in this place in Jerusalem?

*Schneller*: I hope to take as many of the boys here who have no families as is possible.

*Najeeb*: Let me tell my friends who are in the same situation as I am, and try to persuade them to go with us to Jerusalem.

*Schneller*: I will be to you as a father; I will help you in every way I can, in teaching and in friendship in my school.

(*Music*)

*Announcer*: And so the Schneller School welcomed a great number of Syrian refugees and orphan children. And in the school they began their training for useful occupations. Those who could went on to higher education, and even at the present time, the school is still sending out well-trained boys, with good character, out into the world.

As Schneller grew older he was not able to carry on his work. So, upon his retirement, he asked his son, Theodore, to take over.

*Schneller*: Hitherto hath the Lord helped us, my son Theodore. I thank God that He has led us to this twenty-fifth jubilee...

*Theodore*: My father, our faith is in God, and this orphanage, it seems, was an answer to the call of God.

*Schneller*: The motto of this orphanage has been chosen from God's Holy Word... "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the Name of the Lord, our God." (Psalm 20:7)

*Theodore*: And now you are seeing the fruit of your work. Just think, fourteen teachers and 154 craftsmen have been graduated from this school, along with many other good countrymen.

*Schneller*: And now I am going to meet my Lord... And yet I am quite satisfied. I have done my duty to the children of suffering humanity.

*Theodore*: And I will follow in your footsteps. I too will take care of the orphans of these lands.

Schneller: God bless you. Do not forget to keep Him always as your Guide.

*Theodore*: Father, you have been full of faith, hope and love. Have confidence that we too will be filled with these heavenly blessings.

*Announcer*: And finally God took again His charge. Father Schneller died in the year 1896. His son, Theodore, took over his responsibilities in the orphanage. And when the twentieth century dawned, the Syrian Orphanage was known throughout all of Palestine. Its graduates had gone forth to the length and breadth of the land as independent craftsmen and noble citizens. And even after the events in Palestine, the grandchildren of Johann Schneller did not lose their faith in God, even though they had lost their buildings in the occupied land. They started two new branches of the orphanage, one in Khurbat Qanfaar in the Baka'a, called the Johann Ludwig Schneller Institute, and the other, in an area near Amman, Jordan. This autumn, this institution will celebrate its one hundredth anniversary. Let us thank God for its message and service.

(*Music, fading as these words are spoken with it*)

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the Name of the Lord, our God".

* * * * *

## TOWARDS A BETTER CHRISTIAN FAMILY

A study Conference was held in the Y.W.C.A. camp, Sidi Bishr, Alexandria, U.A.R., from July 27 through August 6th, 1960, under the auspices of the Near East Christian Council to study the Christian family today, its problems and how it should be. Forty-five delegates and thirty-five visitors attended the conference representing the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Churches.

The conference published a call to all the church leaders over the Near East asking them to plan and organize specialized programs for the different age groups of the families. The Christian family and the church must be closely related. This will be the strongest tie which unifies the Christian family in the modern world.

The conference was closed with a devotional interdenominational service led by a Coptic and a Catholic priest and a Protestant minister.

HABIB SAÏD

# WHAT WILL THEY READ?

**Through the hands of the Literature Secretary of the N.E.C.C. pass the programs and ideas for Christian literature daily. Not only production, but distribution as well, fall under his responsibility. Here are some of the opportunities, and the inevitable problems, that are his... ... .. .... ... ... .. .... ..**

One of the most significant developments in the Literature Department of the Near East Christian Council has been the appearance of more than a hundred books in Arabic during the last three years for different categories of readers varying from children and new literates to university students and the intelligentsia. Through the efforts of many agencies, and the support of the three *Fellowships of Christian Writers* in this area, the ministry of print has become a vivid spot in the landscape of the Council.

During the last three years the work has been carried on according to a "program" approved by the Arabic Christian Literature Council, and much ground has been covered. In the next Triennial meeting, a new program for next three years will be discussed and studied in the light of new trends of thinking and reading in the area. The Secretary of the Committee, in Cairo, will be greatly helped if area-committees and interested people in the different regions could provide him with their actual needs, projects of new books desirable, and problems that must be faced. The only way to make real progress is by planning a great program!

*Originals vs. Translations*

As a rule, original writing is encouraged, and an attempt is made to support young writers

by all possible means. Although the percentage of original books is still small, yet a good start has been made. Translations, over the past three years, have remained essential, especially in literary classics, theology, technical books and current world thought. But even in such translations the department insists that they be clothed in the grace and charm of our own idiom. Permission has always been requested from the publishers of the original to add, subtract, and adapt in order to speak to the mind of the Near East.

Our program for the future will necessarily include both original work and freely adapted translation. There is always scope for both simple and classical writing. Our three teams comprise at present about fifty authors and translators, but more are needed, especially from among the younger generation.

*Clearing House of Information*

One of the reports of the functional discussion groups on Christian Literature at the Study Conference held in Asmara, Eritrea, stated that the countries represented at the conference were so widely scattered that it was difficult for workers in one country to know what literature materials were available elsewhere. The need was expressed for a clearing house of information on Christian literature, including both existing titles and new publications, in the various languages.

This need was referred to the Literature Committee of the N.E.C.C. with the request that it sponsor a literature service available to all countries in the region. The Central Literature Committee which represents all the areas of the Council will bring this matter up at the general meeting to be held next April, just before the Triennial Meeting of the Council. A program will be set forward for a central information bureau for all of the Muslim world.

*Training Institutes*

The Asmara conference urged the holding of short-term training institutes or workshops for volunteers and part-time writers. The first institute of this kind was held in Alexandria, from June 12-30, 1960, at which time forty-eight Christian writers from twelve different countries met for three weeks to study three main emphases: Simple Writing; Magazine Production, and Writing Religious Drama.

Lectures and practical exercises were also held on many other subjects such as the art of Translation, Writing for non-Christians, Readibility and Poetry. The institute was so inspiring and successful that it was felt that it should be held annually.

*Resolution on Magazines*

For many readers the most appealing form of literature is the magazine. Periodicals of all kinds have been increasing during the past ten years. There are more than a dozen magazines in Arabic,

published by the different protestant communities alone. Societies of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt have eight magazines. But many people are concerned about the nature and contents of some of these magazines.

For this reason, editors of Christian magazines of the Arabic-speaking area present at the Institute in Alexandria met on June 21, 1960, and adopted the following resolution:

"We are deeply concerned about the present state of the magazines in this area. These magazines are characterized by small size, poor quality of contents, and unattractive format, the result of scanty resources. This state of affairs can be traced to various factors, among which are:

1) A multiplicity of magazines serving a readership which overlaps in different areas.
2) Lack of a well defined purpose for each magazine.
3) Duplication in the nature of contents.
4) Very small financial resources, a consequence of lack of cooperation and coordination.

"We, therefore, recommend to the A.C.L.C. that discussion be held at the next triennial meeting on the desirability of making magazines more effective in this area by (a) having one good magazine of a general nature for all readers in the area of the Council, published under its auspices; (b) reducing to two or three the number of magazines published, each to have a definite distinctive purpose, such as serving the Christian family, the needs of youth, or the cause of Christian education.

"The individual churches could then have news bulletins of their own for their local constituency."

This matter will be a subject for serious study and concern at the next meeting of the A.C.L.C., just prior to the Triennial Meeting of the Council.

*Books for Non-Christians*

From various quarters, the secretary of the Literature Department has been asked about publications dealing with the presentation of the Christian faith to non-Christians. Now, much of our literary output concentrates on making Christ known to needy men and women in a non-Christian area. The old methods of controversy have been abandoned, and the positive presentation of Christ is in the foreground. But in every book, the understanding of our countrymen's views to life, their modes of thinking, their religious ideas, have formed the background.

Most of our publications are ostensibly for Christians, but to make them intelligible for all, we use common terminology, quote similarities and expressions from their sacred books, and stress the vital problems tacitly and tactful-

ly. Even in our commentaries, we have adopted the method of Shaikh Baidawi, one of the famous commentators on the Qur'an.

At the Executive Committee meeting of the N.E.C.C. in February 1960, this subject was discussed. The committee fully realizes the need for this type of publication, as well as recognizing the difficulties, such as censorship and impeded distribution, in publication. The policy of the A.C.L.C. aims to fully represent all the varying streams of Arabic Christian literature, and every effort is made to fulfill this policy.

Members of the various area committees are being canvassed to investigate further possibilities on future publications. Discussion will be continued at the time of the Triennial Meeting. Any comments or proposals from any person or committee on this delicate subject will be gratefully received.

*Problems of Distribution*

How to get the books to the reading public is by all odds, and by universal consent, the present major problem of any Christian literature program. At present our average output in Arabic alone amounts to six million pages annually, but our average sales amount to only five million. This means that yearly we have a residue of one million pages on our shelves. The stocks on the shelves in Beirut and Cairo amount to $30,000 of old books.

Recommendation has been made to the A.C.L.C. that a distribution scheme for the whole area be considered. This area-wide scheme will be presented to the Central Literature Committee and the A.C.L.C. at their full meeting in 1961.

Dr. William N. Wysham, recently retirerd as Chairman of the Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature and formerly in literature work in Irán, is spending some months in the Middle East as Consultant on Literature Distribution to the Near East Christian Council. He is working on most of the matters mentioned above and will be corresponding with those engaged in literature work. Dr. Wysham plans to make a full report to the Literature Department of the Council in advance of the triennial meeting.

This acute problem needs all the hard thinking, energy and prayers of as many people as possible. We have not yet exhausted all possible means of successful distribution.

Through all of this, there is need for prayer and the inspired guidance of God. We, and all our colleague authors, journalists, translators, printers and salesmen, seek to know the mind of God concerning these situations, praying for guidance in meeting them rightly. Will you join with us in prayer?

# *BOOKS AND THE MAN*

**Frequently in these pages of the** News Bulletin, **we commend to our readers new books of vital importance to the Near East. In this issue, we will not introduce you to specific new books, but rather to a man, whose books have all been noteworthy, and whose monthly C.M.S.** News-Letter **always contains some penetrating observation on the Church in the World. Let us introduce you to Max Warren, General Secretary of the Church Missionary Society.... .. ..**

Canon M.A.C. Warren, the General Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, and Mrs. Warren are at present on a long tour which will take them via the U.S.A. to New Zealand and Australia, Malaya, North India and Pakistan, Iran and Jordan. They will be arriving in the area of the N.E.C.C. in January, visiting first in Iran and then later in Jordan.

Dr. Warren was born in Ireland in 1904, and spent eight years of his childhood in India where his parents were C.M.S. missionaries. He was educated at Marlborough College and then at Jesus College, Cambridge, where he took his B.A. in 1926 (a double first, in history and theology). After doing more training at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, he went out to Northern Nigeria as a missionary in 1927. He was there only ten months and was then invalided home. Three years of serious illness followed, but after a miraculous recovery he married and was ordained deacon in 1932. Only four years later he was appointed Vicar of Holy Trinity, Cambridge, the church of which Charles Simeon had been Vicar.

**Copyright Photo by Walter Steneman, M.B.E.**

In 1942, Dr. Warren succeeded Dr. Wilson Cash as General Secretary of C.M.S., coming into this position of leadership at a most formative stage of the Society's growth. From 1943 until 1958 he was a member of the Ad Interim committee of the I.M.C. and for some years a member of the Joint Committee of I.M.C. and W.C.C.

Dr. Warren reads widely and over the past few years has published several books, among which are *Partnership: The Study of An Idea* (SCM, 1956); *Challenge and Response: Six Studies in Missionary Opportunity* (SPCK, 1960); and *The Christian Imperative* (SCM, 1955). His famous monthly, C.M.S. *News-Letter,* which circulates around the world is recognized as unique.

Himself a convinced Evangelical, he has done much to promote understanding and fellowship between churchmen of all shades of opinion. Quite recently, he preached the sermon at the Eucharistic observance of the Feast of the Stigmata at the Anglican Friary of Saint Francis at Cerne Abbas.

Wherever they have been, Dr. and Mrs. Warren's home has been a centre of friendship and vitality where men and women of many lands have found their faith renewed, enriched and challenged. During this present tour they hope to meet church leaders and missionaries in the different countries.

*D. Blackburn,*
*— Cairo.*

* * * * *

"You and I cannot bring men to God by whistling to them at a distance. We have to go and meet them, as God does, and psychologically speaking this means coming to them imaginatively where they imagine themselves to be. Do you remember how we read in Ezekiel 3.15 that the prophet was sent upon a difficult mission to help men to discover where they really were in the eyes of God?... If then we are to evangelize men we too must "sit where they sit," "be conversant with them," and the experience may be to us both an astonishment and an overwhelming experience as it was to Ezekiel."

Max Warren, in *The Christian Imperative*

Torrents of rain drenched Beirut again and again during the week in November when the Council's Radio Audio-Visual Committee was meeting in Beirut to develop more fully the outlines of the plans for cooperation with the Lutheran World Federation in its Christian broadcasting station at Addis Ababa. These were the greatly needed early rains (of the "early and latter rains") after an usually dry and thirsty year, and they came down like liquid gold on the farmers and the herdsmen. For us, concerned with radio broadcasting, they gave added meaning to Isaiah 55,10f.:

> *"As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."*

The Committee, with representatives from Iran, the Gulf, and Egypt, as well as closer areas, wrestled with problems of finance, personnel, policy, and technology. If programs are to be on the air by Easter of 1962, there is much to be done, not only in construction at the site but in preparation of programs for readiness at that time. We were especially

glad to have with us Rev. Edwin Luidens of the Arabia Mission of the Reformed Church. Coming direct from the office of RAVEMCCO in New York, where he has served as Executive Secretary, he is assigned by his Mission to the radio work of the N.E.C.C., and thus becomes our third full-time specialist in this field along with Rev. Harold Fisher and Dr. Nadim Makdisi, both from the Synod of Syria and Lebanon. It was fortunate that for part of the week Dr. Sigurd Aske, Lutheran World Federation Director of the radio station, sat with the Committee, being in Beirut *en route* to Ethiopia. One evening at a meeting open to friends and church workers in the area he spoke about his part in this cooperative project. Others spoke of the hope that all church members would enter into the project, whether in production of material, or in following up and making more fruitful its programs on the air. The success of this great effort will lie in large measure with the churches themselves.

Recent visits we have made to four patriarchs have underlined the importance of closer cooperation between orthodox and evangelicals in the coming months as we look forward to the Triennial Meeting of the Council, and also to the great integration meeting of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council at New Delhi in November of 1961. His Holiness Ignatius Yacoub, Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, continues to be a strong supporter of interchurch cooperation through our Council. His Holiness Kyrillos VI, Coptic Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria, and His Holiness Zareh, Armenian Orthodox Catholicos of Cilicia, have indicated their desire to be increasingly active in our ecumenical projects. In many areas of Christian life we are finding that we need help from one another through Christian fellowship and the interchange of ideas.

The Triennial Assembly of the Council will be held in Beirut from the evening of April 17th, 1961, through the evening of April 21st. Information about the appointment of delegates is being sent to member bodies. The Executive Committee and the Arabic Christian Literature Committee, and perhaps other committees, will meet just prior to the Assembly. The Annual Christian Medical Conference will take place just afterward, during the first week in May. Leaders from the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey will quite possibly be in Beirut at the time of the Assembly, in connection with area institutes and discussions on ecumenical matters.

Arrangements are going forward in preparation for the survey of theological education in our area which in 1958 the International

Missionary Council was requested to undertake. The actual visitations of the survey team, made up of at least one I.M.C. secretary along with appointees from our own area, will not take place until the late summer of 1961. But in the preparations for this visitation, churches and institutions will be asked for information and recommendations that will help the team evaluate the needs and conditions of our situation. The purpose will be not only to find out what is being done to train our pastors for the churches, but it will be in addition to inquire into what types of leadership training the churches are wanting to develop. Any modification of the present methods of training of leadership which the churches desire, or any new fields in which church leaders should be trained, are maters in which the survey team will be deeply interested. The training of lay leaders too, and the use of laymen in the leadership of the church, will be studied. Other matters for consideration will be the opportunities offered by training in radio and other techniques.

The coordination of the work of the churches through literature is always going forward through our Literature Secretary, Mr. Habib Said. The literary work is to be greatly encouraged this year by the presence of Dr. William Wysham, loaned to us as consultant on literature distribution. Just retiring as Secretary for Literature and Functional Services of the United Presbyterian Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations, Dr. Wysham comes with a wide experience in literature matters and also with a knowledge of the Near East attained as a missionary in Iran. We look forward with gratitude and expectation to this period of his being with us.

The Advent season is a time of preparation for the coming of the Lord. May all our work be a preparation of the way for the coming of the Holy Spirit in power, without Whose life in our life all our plans and schemes are nothing.

* * * *

"Cynicism cannot be the attitude of the Christian. The obligation for the Christian is the realism of faith. In his realism the Christian will face the genuine complexity of human problems, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin of which Paul speaks in Romans 7.13, together with its prevalence in us all. In his faith the Christian will seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, will not despise the day of small things, and will follow the example of his Lord and refuse to quench even a smouldering wick of hope which has inspired the hearts and minds of men..."

Max Warren, in News-Letter 211.

PETER MANOOGIAN

**There are great numbers of Christian medical personnel working in the Near East, many of them graduates of some of the excellent medical and nursing training schools in the area. Last year the first medical conference of the Near East was held in Beirut, a beginning to a closer coordination and fellowship among these medical workers. The correspondent on medical matters, himself a leading doctor in Beirut and a medical officer of the Christian Medical Center, reports on the second of these conferences.**

The second Christian Medical Conference of the Near East was held in Beirut, Lebanon, on the 4th and 5th of May, 1960. The eighty-eight members who registered represented twelve Near Eastern countries: Aden, Afghanistan, Cyprus, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Sudan and Syria.

The theme of the conference was "Christian Witness Through Medical Work," and was keynoted by the chairman, Dr. Peter Manoogian, who stressed that the fellowship and interchange of experience at these medical conferences would result inevitably in the vitalization of our spiritual lives.

At the two business sessions, the proposed Constitution and By-laws, which had been prepared in the previous year by the Executive Committee, were read, discussed, modified, and unanimously approved. A copy was sent to the Near East Christian Council for approval.

Dr. Paul Jamison, of Tanta, Egypt, was elected as chairman to serve a term of three years. Dr. Roy D. Clark, also of Tanta, Egypt, was elected as Vice-Chairman. Miss Sue Culbertson, of Tanta, and Mr. LaVand Syverson, of Beirut, were named as Secretary and Treasurer. These four, along with Dr. Peter Manoogian, of Beirut, will serve also as the

Executive Committee.

Devotional direction was given by the Rex John Markarian of Haigazian College in Beirut, Dr. R. Park Johnson, field representative of the Commission on Ecumenical Mission of the United Presbyterian Church, and Dr. Manoogian. In keeping with the theme of the conference, the emphasis was on the necessity of our relationship to Christ in whom our vocation, our call, our mission and our responsibility take roots.

A panel on the theme of the conference was led by the Rev. Richard Cochrane, formerly on the staff of the Hamlin Memorial Hospital in Lebanon, and discussion was held on the relationship between witnessing and medical work. Christian medical work should make provision for proclaiming the good news about Jesus Christ. In an effort to accomplish this objective, medical care should be of the highest quality. Various methods of reaching the patients and their families for Christ include: evangelistic visits to patients, services in the clinics, services in the wards, personal work by staff, and the use of tracts, Bibles and films. The importance of love expressed to patients and their families was stressed. To develop this love the medical worker should maintain his own personal devotional life at a high level.

على اننا لسنا ننكر ان الفوز بالحرية والعقل قد ينطوي على بعض المخاطر . فالحرية قد تُستخدم لاغراض شريرة آثمة كما ان الطاقة الذرية قد تستخدم للحرب والقتل . والحرية قد تهدي الى سواء السبيل وقد تضل الناس عن الحق . ولكن الارتقاء يصحبه دائماً التعرض للمخاطر . وهذا في حد ذاته يدفعنا الى ان نلتمس دوماً المعرفة السليمة المستمدة من ثقافتنا الادبية والدينية . اما جمودنا في التفكير الديني وبقاؤنا في المراتب البدائية التي احتلها الاقدمون ، بينما تزحف العلوم الاخرى حولنا زحفاً مضطرداً ، فهذا قتل للمثل العليا التي يقدمها لنا الدين .

والحرب ، مهما يكن الباعث اليها ، تدينها اليوم الشعوب المستنيرة — كذلك نرى مفكرو الاسلام يدينون « الجهاد » او الحرب الدينية ، ويعيدون النظر في تأويلها بقولهم ان « الجهاد » انما المقصود منه هو مكافحة الجهل والامية والفقر والمظالم الاجتماعية والاقطاعية ، كما يتحدث المسيحيون تماماً عن مكافحة هذه المساوئ طوعاً لاحكام دينهم . على ان « الجهاد » من هذا النوع لن يكون مستطاعاً بدون « الاجتهاد » في الاغراض النبيلة . ولن يمكن علاج هذه المساوئ ، ولن يقدر امرؤ ان يقوم بالتزاماته كمواطن في وطنه وفي العالم ما لم يستمتع بحرية الفكر والعقيدة في جو من الاحترام والتسامح المتبادلين .

وانا لنغتبط اشد الاغتباط ان نرى اليوم بوادر الاحترام والتسامح بين اصحاب الاديان المختلفة . وهذا الاتجاه السليم سيقوى على الزمن بفضل انتشار اسباب التعليم والتهذيب والاستنارة . ومهمتنا ان ندفع هذا الاتجاه الى الامام ونسنده بكل ما اوتينا من قوة وعزم . وحين يكون المتعلم مسوقاً بخير مواطنيه واخوانه في الانسانية ، لا بالاغراض الذاتية الانانية ، وحين يكرس عقله ومواهبه للسلام والمودة بين الناس وتوطيد علاقات الالفة والتفاهم ، وخدمة الآخرين ، عندئذ تتوافر الثقة وتؤتي ثمارها في تمهيد السبيل للبحث الحر المجرد عن الهوى والمنزه عن الغاية .

الزمن مروقاً والحاداً . وقد أخنى ذلك العالم رأسه امام القوات الرجعية ، واخرس صوته خصومه من زعماء الكنيسة ، على ان تعاليمه لم تلبث طويلاً حتى ذاعت بين الناس وغدت معرفة مشتركة يسندها العالم كله .

ولئن تكن الحرية هي دعامة الرقي في الاوساط العلمية ، فانها لكذلك ايضاً في الاوساط الدينية . والحريتان صنوان لا يمكن الفصل بينهما . فان انت انكرت احداهما او كتمت انفاسها ، قضيت على الاخرى ايضاً . ونحن لموقنون ان الفصل في هذا العصر الحديث بين الدين وعلم اللاهوت وبين حرية الفكر والبحث العقلي السليم انما هو مجهود عقيم لا يجدي فتيلاً . والذي لا مراء فيه ان الدين الحق لا يخشى ابداً البحث العقلي . وقد اجتاز الفكر المسيحي عصوراً ارتجف فيها الاتقياء المتدينون امام نظريات العلم ولم يقربوها الا في كثير من الفزع والرعدة . وكان مردُّ هذا كله الى زعم باطل قوامه ان الدين والعلم لا يأتلفان بحكم طبائع الاشياء . على ان الاراء المستندة الى هذه المزاعم آخذة في الزوال من الاوساط المسيحية . وأخضعت العقائد الدينية لكثير من اسباب النقد والبحث ، وخرجت من بوتقة العقل سليمة صافية . وهذا التطور آخذ طريقه من جيل الى جيل ، لان لعقل الانسان حدوداً ، ولن يقدر انسان واحد او جيل واحد ان يعرف المعرفة كلها . والحق الذي يحاول عقل الانسان الكشف عنه تقيده حتماً مشاكل العصر ومقتضيات الزمن .

والذي يُخشى منه عادة ان حرية التفكير والبحث قد تعرض الدين للخطر ، او ان « الاجتهاد » قد يؤذي العقائد القائمة ، او ان هذه الحرية قد تتمادى فتمس جوهر الدين ذاته ، وصحة عقائده ، وماضي تاريخه ، ومدى صلاحيته لرقي الافراد والجماعات ، ومدى قدرته على التطور ، وسماحته وتجرده من التعصب ، ومبلغ احترامه للعقل ، ومسايرته للعلوم الاخرى . لكن مهما يكن من امر فان الحجز على حرية العقل في البحث الديني اشد خطراً على الدين ذاته ، اذ يُقصى عنه كل مفكر صادق ، وكل باحث حر ، وكل متعلم نابه ، ولا يبقى معه الا ذوو العقول الهزيلة والنفوس الضامرة .

والتجارب والفكر الرصين . واننا لواجدون بين كبار المفكرين في العالم الاسلامي مَن مهدوا الطريق في هذا الكفاح لترقية الفكر الانساني ، والانتصار لقضية حرية الفكر . ولا خفاء ان تحرير العقل يقتضي دائماً كفاحاً وصداماً . وحيثما ينهض الافراد او مؤسسات العلم لالقاء ظلال من الشك على ما تواضع عليه القدماء واخذوه قضايا مسلمة ، والمطالبة بحق البحث والدرس وصوغ الاحكام الجديدة في ضوء هذا البحث ، فان نزاعاً لا شك يثور بينهم وبين انصار القديم المتواضع عليه .

فهل سيؤدي هذا النزاع الى اضطراب في مراكز العلم الاسلامية التاريخية القديمة التي تحرص كل الحرص على ابقاء احكام الاسلام ومبادئه في اوضاعها الحالية التي ورثتها عن العهود الاولى ؟ أم ان الحرية الفكرية في الاوساط الجامعية الحديثة ستظفر بقصب السبق في هذا النزاع الناشب بين الاراء العصرية الحديثة وبين الاراء القديمة المتوارثة عن الماضي ؟ وهل ستلقى نظريات طلاب الجامعات واساتذتها الجانحة الى الحرية ، ترحيباً ولقاء حسناً ، أم سيكون نصيبها الزجر من جانب الهيئات الجامدة التي تود الابقاء على القديم في اوضاعه الراهنة ؟ والحق انه ليس بوسعنا الاجابة عن هذه الاسئلة . على ان صالح الافراد والشعوب والحكومات مرهون اليوم — كما كان في الماضي — بحسن الاستجابة لنزعات الحرية الفكرية ، هذه الحرية التي يعتز بها العلماء والمفكرون ويدافعون عنها ما استطاعوا الى ذلك سبيلاً ، والتي هي في الواقع جزء من الحرية العامة التي ينادي بها العالم اليوم . وانت قد تنكر على الناس حق التفكير والبحث والاستقراء واستخلاص الاحكام والنتائج ، ولكنهم لن يقبلوا مثل هذا الوضع ، لان الاتجاه العصري نحو حرية الفكر عارم دافق بحيث لا تقدر قوة على الارض ان تصده او تعطل امتداده في فصول الدراسة او قاعات المحاضرات او بحوث الطلاب . وانا لنذكر في هذا المقام موقف الهيئات المسيحية الجامدة في القرن السابع عشر من العالم غاليليو ، ونعلم ان هذا العالم قد أُستدعي الى رومية سنة ١٦٣١ للتحقيق معه عن اتهامه باذاعة نظرية عن الكون حسبها علماء الدين واشياخ الكنيسة في ذلك

على ان المشاكل لا تلبث ان تطل على الباحث حين يسأل عن السبيل الى هذه المعرفة ، وعن الوسيلة التي تمكنه من الفوز بقسط وافر من المعرفة التي لا يتسرب اليها الشك ولا تدحضها الادلة النافية . فالاسئلة عن الله ، والحياة ، والانسان ، والعلاقات البشرية ، والحياة بعد الموت ، وغيرها من موضوعات – هذه كلها سائغة لا ضير على الانسان ان يبحثها ، بل هي ضرورية لا مناص له من الخوض فيها . على ان الموقف يسوده الاضطراب والتنافر حين يستعرض الباحث امامه مقاييس الحكم . فهل يكون الوحي هو المقياس ، ام تكون الآيات الكتابية ، ام الرأي الشخصي ، ام اجماع الثقات المعترف لهم برجاحة الفكر ، ام العقائد التي صاغها الاقدمون ، أم هناك مقياس آخر جديد يمكن به تقويم الحق وموازنته ؟ ثم هل يمكن الفوز برؤى ومدركات جديدة عن طريق التربية والتهذيب والبحوث العلمية والتفكير المضني الطويل ؟!

وبعبارة اخرى أيكون مبدأ « الاجتهاد » القديم – الذي منح حق البحث الحر لذوي المزايا العقلية الخاصة – صالحاً للتطبيق في هذا العصر ؟ وهل يحق للعالم الزاحف في موكب التجديد ان يرفض هذا المبدأ ؟ أغلب الظن ان موضوع النقاش والجدل في العالم الاسلامي سيدور في المستقبل حول صحة هذا المبدأ . ذلك لان في المشاكل الدينية احجاماً عن نقد آثار الماضي وتراث الاقدمين ، واخشى ما يخشاه المحافظون تعرض هذه الآثار للنقد والبحث .

على ان المفكرين المعاصرين اخذوا يوقظون هذه الروح ، روح البحث في المقاييس القديمة ، وهذا البحث في وضعه التمهيدي ، اشبه ما يكون بطريقة سقراط الفيلسوف الاغريقي القديم ، ذلك لان الفيلسوف الاغريقي اخذ على عاتقه ان يوقظ عقول الناس للتفكير المجدد المبتكر ، وأن ينأى بهم عن التفكير السائب والاقوال الهوجاء ، وان يبث فيهم روح الشجاعة لبحث الآراء التقليدية القديمة والافكار المتواضع عليها بحثاً سليماً خالصاً من التحزبات الفكرية التي استقرت في الاذهان طويلاً .

وتقوم نظم التعليم الحديثة على أن المعرفة الجديدة لا تتوافر الا بالبحث

# البحث الحر وحرية الفكر

(ترجمه بتصرف الاستاذ حبيب سعيد عن مجلة «العالم الاسلامي The Muslim World» التي تصدر في اميركا منذ خمسين عاماً لتقريب وجهات النظر بين العالمين المسيحي والاسلامي)

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من الاحاديث الاسلامية المأثورة «اطلب العلم ولو في الصين». وقد كان لهذا الحديث أثره مدى الاجيال في تنشيط العلم وتشجيع البحث، ووجد فيه الراغبون في البحث والاجتهاد سنداً ونصيراً، بل أمراً مطاعاً، لترقية ملكات العقل ورفع المستوى الذهني من الناحيتين الفردية والاجتماعية.

ولا حاجة بنا هنا الى ان نشير الى الجهود التي بذلها الاعلام المسلمون الاولون من رجال الدين والفقه والفلاسفة والاطباء والرياضيون والفلكيون وغيرهم لبيان اهتمامهم بتقدم العلم وتطور المعرفة الانسانية. ومن الناحية التاريخية قد نهج اولئك نهج المفكرين الاولين الذين اتجهت اشواقهم وميولهم الى استكناه اسرار الكون، والانسان ذاته، والعلاقات القائمة بين البشرية وبين ما وراء الطبيعة.

وقد شملت متجهات تفكيرهم اسئلة شتى مثل: ما الانسان؟ ما علاقته بالله؟ ما النفس؟ ما طبيعة هذا الكون؟ ما هي مقومات الاخلاق السليمة؟ ما تأويل الكتب المقدسة؟ ما وظيفة الانبياء؟ وغير ذلك من مسائل خطيرة.

واذا نحن حاولنا تبرير هذا الحق الذي يطالب به الانسان للكشف عن هذه الاسرار، فاننا واجدونه في طبيعة الانسان ذاته، ذلك لان الخالق عز وجل قد حباه بعقل، وبموهبة التفكير، وبقوة الذاكرة، وفوق كل شيء قد بث في نفسه رغبة ملحة لا تشبع، تسعى في غير وناء نحو حيازة المعرفة والتوسع في مدركاته وفهمه للعالم حوله.

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*The Near East Christian Council* is made up of four regional councils: the Church Council of Iran; the Egypt Inter Mission Council; the North Sudan Christian Council, and the United Christian Council of South-west Asia (for Syria, Lebanon and Jordan). In these regions and in other countries, church bodies and missionary societies are also members of the Council.

*The Near East Christian Council* is an organization that seeks to make effective cooperation and witness of the churches in an area extending from Morocco and Algeria to Iran and Arabia, from Turkey to the Sudan and Ethiopia.